

Final Report of the Evaluation of the Connecticut

Department of Correction's Project RAISE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC) received a grant from the United States Department of Education to develop and implement RAISE (Realizing Achievement in Social Education), a life skills programs for inmates. The goal of this program was to provide inmates with basic job and life skills which would help them succeed in the community once they were released from prison. The Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Central Connecticut State University conducted a process and outcome evaluation of RAISE. The evaluation consisted of qualitative observations of RAISE classes, questionnaires to assess RAISE participant's knowledge of relevant life skills and impressions of the program, and records from DOC to assess participant characteristics and post-program recidivism. The evaluation occurred from 2005 to 2007 at the three correctional facilities where RAISE was implemented: Osborn Correctional Institution (OCI), York Correctional Institution (YCI), and Manson Youth Institution (MYI).

Summary of Findings

Observations of RAISE sessions revealed that while a standard curriculum was used across the three correctional institutions, individual counselor style and institutional demands dictated the actual implementation of the curriculum. Thus, there were differences across the institutions in class size, frequency of individual versus group interaction, frequency of sessions, and length of time to complete the program. In addition, the implementation of RAISE was somewhat influenced by the individual demands of the inmate population at a particular institution. For example, the young age and associated immaturity of MYI participants required a more hands-on approach in the classroom than the more mature populations of OCI and YCI.

Quantitative assessment of RAISE with a sample of 299 participants involved examination of program retention data, DOC records, and several paper and pencil surveys. Perhaps the most important finding regarding program retention is the high rate of program completion. Excluding the participants who were unable to complete the program due to administrative reasons, 83.69% of enrolled participants completed the program. This high rate of program completion was consistent across the three institutions. The only significant predictor of program completion was race in that Non-White participants were more likely to successfully complete RAISE (87%) than White participants (75%).

RAISE participants demonstrated significant improvements on paper and pencil life skills surveys. Improvements on a survey of housing and money management skills was evident among participants at all three institutions. Improvements on a survey of career planning skills was evident at OCI and YCI, but not at MYI. Participants also evidenced a significant improvement on a survey of stress management ability.

The survey assessing participants' satisfaction with the program revealed an overwhelmingly positive evaluation of RAISE. Ratings on general as well as specific

aspects of the program were above the midpoint of the scale, with the vast majority skewed toward the positive anchor of the scale indicating they found the various topics covered by the program as “very helpful.”

Recommendations

Our first recommendation is to examine the reincarceration rate for participants who completed RAISE after all participants have been in the community for a period of at least one year. We were unable to perform this component because a large percentage of inmates participating in RAISE had not been released from prison at the time of the preparation of this report. A comparison of the reincarceration rate of this group to their institutional peers will provide a basis for examining the influence of the program on criminal behavior.

If RAISE is to be extended to the general population of inmates preparing for release, we have two recommendations. First, the timing of RAISE participation should be strategic. Inmates should participate in RAISE within a few months of their anticipated release from custody. Participating in RAISE significantly before release from custody may reduce the potential effectiveness of the program. As the time between participation in RAISE and the opportunity to utilize the skills and information presented in RAISE widens, the skills and information will decay. Similarly, participation in RAISE too close to the date of release from custody may result in inmates’ leaving custody or transferring before they have an opportunity to complete the program, as was the case with about 17% of the participants in the RAISE evaluation.

Second, the length of time to deliver RAISE may need to be standardized across institutions in order to ensure that inmates have ample opportunity to complete the program prior to their release. If the length of the program is extended over the course of several months, inmates may be released or transferred before they have an opportunity to complete the program. On the other hand, delivery of RAISE in a highly condensed a period of time, such as a full day program for 2 weeks, poses the risk that there will be insufficient time for participants to process the material and practice the skills that are presented by the counselors.

If RAISE is implemented into the general inmate population, it would be important to develop assessment tools capable of measuring the specific learning objectives of each session, and to regularly assess inmate progress through the curriculum. For example, an assessment tool might document the number of new skills that the inmate was able to successfully demonstrate over the course of the program. This information would have two purposes. One, it could provide a means for examining counselor’s adherence to the curriculum and identify needed changes to the curriculum. Two, it could provide a more precise measurement of the program’s influence on reincarceration and the specific skills provided by the program that are most linked with successful reentry.

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INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF RAISE

The Connecticut Department of Correction received a grant from the United States Department of Education to develop and implement a life skills programs for inmates. The goal of this program was to provide inmates with basic job and life skills which would help them succeed in the community once they were released from prison. The Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) formed a research partnership with the Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC) for the purpose of evaluating Project RAISE (Realizing Achievement in Social Education), a life skills training program. The evaluation consisted of qualitative observations of RAISE classes, questionnaires to assess RAISE participant's knowledge of relevant life skills and impressions of the program, and records from DOC to assess participant characteristics and post-program recidivism.

The evaluation occurred from 2005 to 2007 at the three correctional facilities where RAISE was implemented: Osborn Correctional Institution (OCI), York Correctional Institution (YCI), and Manson Youth Institution (MYI). The Connecticut DOC has five security levels for correctional institutions; Level 5, maximum security; Level 4, high security; Level 3, medium security; Level 2, minimum security. Level 1 is designated for inmates that are being supervised in the community by the DOC. OCI is a Level 3 facility which houses 1,929 male inmates. Of these inmates, 1,661 are sentenced and 268 are pretrial. There are 17 inmate housing units at Osborn. YCI is Connecticut's only facility for females, managing all female offenders regardless of security level. The facility houses 1,408 offenders, both pretrial and sentenced. MYI is a Level 4 facility

that houses 680 inmates in ten buildings. This facility houses male inmates between the ages of 14 and 21.

The following report presents the qualitative and quantitative findings of the RAISE evaluation. It begins with a description of the RAISE philosophy and curriculum. This section is followed by the qualitative observations of RAISE classes. Next, we present the methodology and findings of the quantitative aspect of the evaluation. Finally, we present our conclusions and our recommendations for future programming.

Program Philosophy and Curriculum Development

The philosophy of RAISE was that training inmates in life skills can provide them with the confidence and tools to help them discover their strengths and ultimately reduce their likelihood of recidivism. The program was implemented by Education Services within the Department of Correction. Education Services developed the curriculum, hired and supervised counselors at the three correctional facilities, and selected inmates to participate. The curriculum was created by Education Services staff. They developed the curriculum by first reviewing existing life skills programs, and after not being able to find a satisfactory existing program for a correctional setting, they created their own curriculum. The inmates that attended RAISE did so on a voluntary basis and had to meet certain eligibility requirements. In order to be eligible for RAISE, inmates were required to be in a vocational program and not have significant institutional behavioral problems.

Curriculum

The program's curriculum was delivered in five sequential units: 1) Values and Personal Responsibility, 2) Decision Making and Goal Setting, 3) Employment Skills, 4)

Managing Money, and 5) Transition Planning. The Values and Personal Responsibility unit included activities such as defining personal values and responsibility, completing a personal inventory to determine if one's values correlated with their actions and goals, and identifying values and responsibilities needed to be a contributing member of society upon release. The Decision Making and Goal Setting unit included activities such as identifying and understanding personality traits that could lead to criminal behavior and recidivism, identifying high-risk emotions and how they can lead to destructive decision making, pros and cons in decision making, identifying personal strengths to set goals, and learning importance of long term goals. The Employment unit included activities such as developing an awareness of future career goals, mock job interviews, creation of a cover letter, and creation of a functional resume. The Managing Money unit involved activities such as learning how to create a personal budget, begin a financial portfolio, and calculate and file IRS tax forms. The Transition Planning unit included activities such as learning to access vocational training programs, temporary agencies and trade unions to secure employment or employment training, learning how to obtain basic legal documents, access health care, and developing an individualized transition plan.

At the beginning of each unit in the RAISE curriculum there was a specific goal provided for the counselor along with suggested learning activities (e.g., tools and methods of encouraging learning such as role playing or using newspapers), assessment strategies (e.g., presentations, and counselor observation), resources (library or videos) and technology applications that may be useful (e.g., Microsoft tools).

QUALITATIVE OBSERVATIONS

While quantitative materials were used to evaluate participants' reactions to, and learning from, the RAISE curriculum, evaluation staff also attended several RAISE sessions at each correctional institution to learn how the curriculum was translated from manual to classroom setting. In general, counselors from the three correctional institutions presented the RAISE curriculum in a manner tailored to the students with whom they were working. Thus, while each counselor was meeting the same program goals, their styles of teaching and interaction with participants were different. Counselors from all three correctional institutions stressed that the benefits of RAISE would be determined by the work and dedication which the participants brought into the program. Counselors emphasized that participants had the potential to alter their former lifestyles, and that the skills presented in RAISE could be utilized to become productive and successful members of the community upon release from custody. Observations from RAISE sessions at the three correctional institutions are described below.

York Correctional Institution

RAISE sessions at YCI met for approximately two hours, twice a week. A given RAISE group ran at least a month and at times was conducted over the course of several months. There were usually between five to fifteen students per session, with fluctuations due to participant dropout and release from incarceration. RAISE was a scheduled activity at YCI, and did not usually conflict with other activities such as jobs or other educational programs. RAISE sessions were primarily conducted in a round-table

fashion, emphasizing discussion over lecture. There was also one-on-one interaction between the counselor and each participant.

There were two classrooms at YCI used for RAISE. One classroom was large, with long tables that two or three students could share. The décor of the classroom was bright, with murals and inspirational quotes adorning the walls. Job postings, articles on interview skills, and other reentry materials also hung on the walls. The other classroom was small and narrow, with one long table that all the students shared. There were pictures and artwork on the walls, along with books on how to write resumes and introductory books into certain fields of study.

During one observed RAISE session, the participants entered the classroom to find a question posed on the board. The participants were instructed to write their thoughts or answers to the question for the first five or ten minutes while their journals were reviewed by the counselor. After reviewing the journals, the counselor opened up a discussion about current events, asking what was going on in the news, touching on different news stories, and asking for the participant's opinions on them. These icebreaker techniques seemed to engage the participants. Most participants shared their own opinions and grievances in relation to national news stories.

The class then segued into the module of the day, which was *Values*. The specific topic within that particular module concerned the relation between values and achieving goals. The topic of routines came up and the counselor discussed the importance of participants developing a routine while they are incarcerated that they can carry over after their release. One participant responded by saying that she had difficulty establishing

routines because she was easily bored and tended to lose interest in activities, but that RAISE was interesting to her and a program that held her attention.

During another RAISE session, the topic focused on personal responsibility. The session featured a video about addiction and recovery. Although the content of the video did not overtly relate to the topic being discussed, the underlying construct of personal responsibility was evident, and this was what the counselor was hoping the participant's would pick up on. In discussing personal responsibility, the counselor used personal examples and tried to relate things as much as possible to the real world, "to keep them in touch."

Overall, observed sessions evidenced a high degree of participation. They were upbeat, with few lulls in discussion. Mutual respect between counselor and participants was evident. Breaches of respect were handled in a professional manner: For example, one student abruptly got up and went into the hall to talk to someone. The counselor pointed out, publicly, that using an "excuse me" and "I'm sorry" are needed for such interruptions.

Manson Youth Institution

RAISE sessions at MYI met for two hours, once a week. The class sizes were small, sometimes containing less than five participants. The small size allowed for a high level of individual attention from the counselor. RAISE was not a scheduled activity at MYI, therefore participants in RAISE had to give up time in other programs and classes in order attend RAISE. Completion of all five units usually took two to three months.

The classroom usually used for RAISE was a former carpentry classroom that had been partitioned into smaller rooms, but there was no set classroom for RAISE and the

program met in several different classrooms over the course of the evaluation. In the carpentry room, there were inspirational posters on the walls, but nothing directly related to the RAISE objectives, as there were at YCI. The participants sat at one table. In the summer months, there were portable fans, but no air conditioning. Noise could be heard from other classes through the partitions, which posed distractions, especially for the youthful population of MYI participants.

The participants were of high-school age and probably had a shorter attention span in general, than the participants at YCI and OCI. The participants seemed to get side-tracked easily. Problematic non-verbal behaviors that were evident included lack of eye-contact with the counselor, poor posture, fidgeting, and trying to chip away pieces of the classroom table. The large amount of one-on-one attention available at MYI was therefore ideally suited for the young population of MYI.

In contrast to the participants at YCI and OCI, MYI participants had less experience with financial and employment matters. For example, during one observed session about employment skills, it was apparent that none of the participants knew where to look in the newspaper for a job, and many had never looked for a job before. In contrast to the participants at YCI and OCI, MYI participants also had less maturity. For instance, during one observed about decision making, one participant announced his plans to “get a girl, go to a party and roll a blunt,” as soon as he was released from incarceration. Given the immaturity and low level of familiarity with financial and employment matters, the ability of the counselor to provide frequent one-on-one attention to the participants was crucial to the productive and orderly maintenance of the program.

Overall, verbal and behavioral disruptions seemed to occur frequently. They were handled by allowing the participants to leave the room to go get a drink of water, use the restroom, or go for a walk. Occasionally participants that could not settle down had to be sent back to their cells, but this was atypical.

Osborn Correctional Institution

RAISE sessions at OCI met twice a week for about an hour and a half. The groups were usually of about twenty participants, with fluctuations due to participant drop out, transfers, and release from incarceration. Completion of all five units usually occurred in about three weeks. RAISE class was usually a scheduled activity at OCI, and did not conflict with other programs.

RAISE sessions were held in one of two temperature-controlled classrooms. One classroom had about twenty-five desks. The room was small and cramped with old computers and televisions on a shelf in the back, and a few newspaper pages with jobs postings and some articles about reentry topics posted on the walls. The second classroom was a large auditorium with tiered seating for about sixty participants. This classroom was cavernous and the distance from the blackboard and counselor's desk to the first row of desks was considerable, creating a more formal atmosphere. The walls were covered on both sides enormous murals, one of outer space, and the other of an under water ocean scene.

In observed sessions on employment skills, there was a wide variety of employment experience among participants. Some had had years of steady employment that they planned on returning to after their incarceration. Others had not held regular jobs and were unfamiliar with the process of obtaining employment, and were surprised

by how activities such as job interviews are conducted. For example, during one observed session one participant asked, in relation to the “have you ever committed a felony” question, if he could, “have a written response to the question and read it to the interviewer.”

One session on how to successfully navigate job interview questions typified the structure of observed the RAISE sessions at OCI. The counselor began the session with a lecture focusing on a specific strategy for answering the “felony question” during a job interview. After the lecture, participants were given an in-class assignment that required them to apply the lecture to their own situation. After participants completed the in-class assignment, they began to role play their responses to the felony question using their work sheets. After each role play, the class discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the approach used by the participant.

Overall, RAISE sessions at OCI had more lecture and group discussion as compared to the one-on-one attention that characterized RAISE at MYI. The counselor was firm and made it a point to prevent classroom discussions from straying from the topic at hand. Side-conversations among participants were extinguished quickly. Problematic non-verbal behaviors that were observed were poor posture, and staring into space. It seemed that while discussions were occurring, the majority of the class was alert, but during the lectures, attention would fade.

QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

The primary goals of the outcome evaluation were to determine the program completion rate, identify characteristics of inmates most likely to complete RAISE, and assess pre-post program changes on inmates' knowledge of life skills. The following section describes the study sample and the data that were collected for this evaluation.

Evaluation Participants

Upon entry into RAISE, inmates were asked by evaluation staff if they would participate in the study. Of the 301 inmates approached for participation in the RAISE evaluation, two refused. Of the remaining 299 inmates that participated in the evaluation, 48.5% (n = 145) were from YCI, 36% (n = 110) were from OCI, and 14.7% (n = 44) were from MYI. Slightly more than half of the participants were male (51.5%, n = 189). Participants' average age was 31.37 ($SD = 11.34$). With respect to ethnic background, 25% (n = 121) identified themselves as Black, 34% (n = 102) identified themselves as White, 22.7% (n = 68) as Hispanic, 1.7% (n = 5) as Asian, and 1% (n = 3) as Native American. Participants' average educational level was 11.18 years ($SD = 1.86$). Participants' educational background ranged from 5th grade to completion of a master's degree. More detailed demographic information on participants from each correctional institution is presented below and in Table 1.

YCI Participants. The average age of the YCI participants was 31.94 ($SD = 11.28$). With regard to their educational history, 31.8% (n = 46) had less than a high school diploma or GED, 32.4% (n = 47) had completed a high school diploma or a GED, and 31.7% (n = 46) had attended or completed college or graduate school. With regard to

their employment history, 31% (n = 45) were not employed in the year prior to their incarceration, 22.1% (n = 32) were employed on a full time basis, and 44.1% (n = 64) were employed on a part time basis. Of those who had been unemployed, 26.7% (n = 12) had never been employed. Of those who had been employed on a full or part time basis, the average number of hours worked per week was 39.21 ($SD = 12.32$). With respect to their financial history, 46.9% (n = 68) did not have a checking account, and 38.6% (n = 56) did not have a savings account. With respect to housing, 38.6% (n = 56) had been living with a spouse or significant other in the year prior to their incarceration, 26.2% (n = 38) had been living with their parents or another relative, 14.5% (n = 21) were living alone, and 5.5% (n = 8) were living with a friend or roommate. With respect to marital/family status, 60% (n = 87) were never married, 18.6% (n = 27) were divorced or separated, and 12.4% (n = 18) were married. The majority of the participants (68.3%, n = 99) indicated that they had given birth to at least one child.

MYI Participants. The average age of the MYI participants was 18.05 ($SD = 1.02$). With regard to their educational history, 68.2% (n = 30) did not have a high school diploma or GED, and 20.5% (n = 9) had completed a high school diploma or GED. With regard to their employment history, 45.5% (n = 20) were not employed in the year prior to their incarceration, 22.7% (n = 10) were employed on a full time basis, and 27.3% (n = 12) were employed on a part time basis. Of those who had been unemployed, 80% (n = 16) had never been employed. Of those who had been employed on a full or part time basis, the average number of hours worked per week was 30 ($SD = 17.14$). With respect to their financial history, 70.5% (n = 31) did not have a checking account, and 50% (n = 22) did not have a savings account. With respect to housing, 79.5% (n = 35) had been

living with their parents or another relative prior to their incarceration, 11.4% (n = 5) were living with a spouse or significant other, 2.3% (n = 1) were living with a friend or roommate, and 4.5% (n = 2) were living alone. With respect to marital/family status, 81.8% (n = 36) were never married, and 9.1% (n = 4) were separated from their spouse. Only nine (20.5%) indicated that they had fathered a child.

OCI Participants. The average age of the OCI participants was 35.87 ($SD = 11.03$). With regard to their educational history, 42.7% (n = 47) had completed a high school diploma or a GED, 28.2% (n = 31) had less than a high school diploma or GED, and 17.27% (n = 19) had attended or completed college or graduate school. With regard to their employment history, 18.2% (n = 20) were not employed in the year prior to their incarceration, 11.8% (n = 13) were employed on a full time basis, and 59.1% (n = 65) were employed on a part time basis. Of those who had been unemployed, 40% (n = 8) had never been employed. Of those who had been employed on a full or part time basis, the average number of hours worked per week was 46.57 ($SD = 17.95$). With respect to their financial history, 41.8% (n = 46) did not have a checking account, and 33.6% (n = 37) did not have a savings account. With respect to their housing situation prior to incarceration, 44.5% (n = 49) were living with a spouse or significant other, 18.2% (n = 20) had been living with their parents or another relative prior to their incarceration, 9.1% (n = 10) were living alone, and 6.4% (n = 7) were living with a friend or roommate. With respect to their marital/family status, 46.4% (n = 51) were never married, 23.6% (n = 26) were divorced or separated, and 12.4% (n = 18) were married. Over one-half (56.3%, n = 59) indicated that they had fathered at least one child.

Table 1. Participant Demographic Summary

	YCI (n=145)	MYI (n=44)	OCI (n=110)	Total (n=299)
Age in Years	31.94 (SD=11.28)	18.05 (SD=1.02)	35.87 (SD=11.03)	31.37 (SD=11.34)
Ethnicity				
Black	64 (44.1%)	13 (29.5%)	44 (40%)	121 (40.5%)
White	49 (33.8%)	15 (34.1%)	38 (34.6%)	102 (34.1%)
Hispanic	29 (20%)	13 (29.5%)	26 (23.6%)	68 (22.7%)
Asian	2 (1.4%)	3 (6.8%)	0	5 (1.7%)
Native American	1 (0.7%)	0	2 (1.8%)	3 (1%)
Education				
< 12 years	46 (31.7%)	30 (68.2%)	31 (28.2%)	107 (35.8%)
12 years	47 (32.4%)	9 (20.5%)	47 (42.7%)	103 (34.4%)
> 12 years	46 (31.7%)	4 (9.1%)	19 (17.3%)	69 (23.1%)
Did not disclose	6 (4.1%)	1 (2.3%)	13 (11.8%)	20 (6.7%)
Employment (prior to incarceration)				
Unemployed	45 (31%)	20 (45.5%)	20 (18.2%)	85 (28.4%)
Employed parttime	32 (22.1%)	10 (22.7%)	13 (11.8%)	55 (18.4%)
Employed fulltime	64 (44.1%)	12 (27.3%)	65 (59.1%)	141 (47.2%)
Did not disclose	4 (2.8%)	2 (4.5%)	12 (10.9%)	18 (6%)
Housing (prior to incarceration)				
Owned/Rented a home	117 (80.7%)	37 (84.1%)	86 (78.2%)	240 (80.3%)
Owned/Rented a home	1 (0.7%)	0	1 (0.9%)	2 (0.7%)
Halfway House	1 (0.7%)	0	0	1 (0.3%)
Motel	2 (1.4%)	0	1 (0.9%)	3 (1%)
Other	16 (11%)	6 (13.6%)	8 (7.3%)	30 (10%)
Did not disclose	8 (5.5%)	1 (2.3%)	14 (12.7%)	23 (7.7%)
Financial Status (before incarceration)				
Did not have a checking account	68 (46.9%)	31 (70.5%)	46 (41.8%)	145 (48.5%)
Did not have a savings account	56 (38.6%)	18 (40.9%)	37 (33.6%)	111 (37.1%)
Marital Status				
Never Married	87 (60%)	36 (81.8%)	51 (46.4%)	174 (58.2%)
Married	18 (12.4%)	0	14 (12.7%)	32 (10.7%)
Divorced/Separated	27 (18.6%)	4 (9.1%)	26 (23.6%)	57 (19.1%)
Widowed	3 (2.1%)	0	1 (0.9%)	4 (1.3%)
Did not disclose	10 (6.9%)	4 (9.1%)	18 (16.4%)	32 (10.7%)
Children				
At least one child	99 (68.28%)	9 (20.5%)	59 (53.6%)	167 (55.9%)

Materials

Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment Youth Level 4 (ACLSA). The ACLSA is a self-administered questionnaire that assesses a broad range of life skills among individuals aged 16 and older (Casey Family Programs, n.d.). The full version of the scale yields scores on 6 subscales: Career Planning, Daily Living, Housing and Money Management, Self-Care, Social Relationships, and Work Life. After reading an item, respondents rate the degree to which the item describes themselves on a 3 point Likert type scale (1 = not like me, 2 = somewhat like me, 3 = very much like me). Performance on each subscale is assessed by examining the Raw Score (a simple summation of the responses to the subscale) and the Percentage of Mastery Score (the percentage of questions on the subscale that received a rating of 3).

RAISE participants were administered the Career Planning, Housing and Money Management, Social Relationships, and Work Life subscales, which comprised a total of 58 items. The Career Planning subscale assesses a respondent's knowledge of the resources and skills (e.g., education, training, personal contacts) needed to pursue a career. The Housing and Money Management subscale assesses a respondent's knowledge of the home rental process as well as financial concepts such as banking, credit, and investing. The Social Relationships subscale assesses a respondent's willingness and comfort in seeking social support. The Work Life subscale assesses a respondent's understanding of appropriate versus inappropriate behavior in the workplace. The Daily Living and Self-Care subscales were not administered because their content did not pertain to the RAISE curriculum. Participants were administered the ACLSA at the beginning of RAISE and upon their completion of the program.

Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i). The EQ-i is a 133 item self-administered questionnaire that assesses a broad range of personality characteristics among individuals aged 16 and older (Bar-On, 1997). The scale yields a total score, five composite scales (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Adaptability, Stress Management, and General Mood), fifteen brief subscales derived from items from the five composite scales, and four validity scales. The Total score provides a broad indication of the degree to which the respondent is coping with the demand of life. Intrapersonal scale assesses the respondent's self-awareness, self-esteem, and assertiveness. The Interpersonal assesses the respondent's empathy, ability to work with and relate to others. The Adaptability scale assesses the respondent's problem solving skills. The Stress Management scale assesses the respondent's ability to manage stress, impulses, and work under pressure. The General Mood scale assesses the respondent's overall emotional well being and attitude toward life.

After reading an EQ-i item, respondents rate the degree to which the item describes themselves on a 5 point Likert type scale (1 = very seldom or not true of me, 5 = very often true of me or true of me). Psychometric analysis of the EQ-i with offenders has indicated that the scale is internally consistent, and that scores on the scale are negatively correlated with emotional problems (Hemmati, Mills, & Kroner, 2004). These findings suggest that the scale is reliable and the valid for use with an offender population. For purposes of the present evaluation, participants were administered the EQ-i at the beginning of RAISE and upon their completion of the program.

Project RAISE Quality of Life Questionnaire (QoL). The QoL is a 17 item self-administered questionnaire created for the present study to collect demographic and quality of life data on participants. Domains covered by the QoL included occupational, financial, educational, housing, and marital. Participants were administered the QoL at the beginning of RAISE.

Project RAISE Feedback Questionnaire (FQ). The FQ is a 44 item self-administered questionnaire created for the present study to collect data on participants' satisfaction with the RAISE curriculum. Items asked participants to evaluate the program's success in reaching specific objectives contained in the curriculum (e.g., create a personal education plan, learn cost-cutting techniques) as well as to provide global ratings of the program's helpfulness. Most of the items are on a 5 point Likert type scale in which 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree. Some of the items are on a 5 point Likert type scale in which 1 = very unhelpful and 5 = very helpful. Participants were administered the FQ upon their completion of RAISE.

Connecticut Department of Correction Records

Demographic, movement, and assessment data on the participants was obtained from the DOC. Demographic data included participants' race, date of birth, and marital status. Movement data included the date and nature of each participant's last movement in the DOC system (e.g., transfer from one institution to another, release from custody). This data was utilized to examine the release and recidivism of the participants after their completion of RAISE. DOC assessment data included participants' overall risk level, mental health need score, educational need score, substance abuse need score, history of violence risk score, and severity of current offense risk score.

Participant's overall risk level is derived from an assessment conducted by DOC staff upon an inmate's entrance into custody. Participants' overall risk level ranges from 1 to 5, with a level of 5 indicating the client requires the highest level of institutional security. Of the RAISE participants, 19.4% (n =58) were classified into risk level 1, 24.7% (n =74) were classified into risk level 2, 40.5% (n = 121) were classified into risk level 3, and 15.4% (n = 46) were classified into risk level 4. No participants were classified into risk level 5. Participant risk levels were not uniform across institutions. YCI participants were relatively evenly distributed across the risk levels whereas risk level 2 participants were overrepresented in the MYI sample and risk level 3 participants were overrepresented in the OCI sample. Further descriptive data on participants' risk level can be found in Table 2.

Participants' risk/need scores in the areas of mental health, education, substance abuse, history of violence, and severity of current offense risk score are also derived from assessments conducted upon entrance into custody. The mental health need score reflects as assessment of an inmate's mental health history and current need for treatment. Scores range from 1 to 5 with a score of 1 indicating there is no history of mental health treatment and no current need for treatment, and a 5 indicating the presence of a severe mental disorder. The educational need score reflects an assessment of an inmate's educational level. Scores range from 1 to 5 with a score of 1 indicating achievement of post secondary education and a score of 5 indicating an absence of basic educational skills. The substance abuse need score reflects the severity of an inmate's alcohol and drug use. Scores range from 1 to 4 with a score of 1 indicating no significant substance use history and a score of 4 indicating a history of substance dependence and a need for

ongoing treatment. With the exception of the severity of current offense risk scores, risk/need scores significantly differed across institutions. OCI participants had a higher mean history of violence risk score and a higher mean substance abuse need score than YCI participants. YCI participants had a higher mean mental health need score and a lower mean education need score than MYI and OCI participants. Further descriptive data on participants' risk/need scores can be found in Table 3.

Table 2. Participant Risk Level Summary

Risk Level	YCI (n=145)	MYI (n=44)	OCI (n=110)	Total (N = 299)
Level 1	36 (24.8%)	9 (20.5%)	13 (11.8%)	58 (19.4%)
Level 2	38 (26.2%)	18 (40.9%)	18 (16.4%)	74 (24.7%)
Level 3	38 (26.2%)	9 (20.5%)	74 (67.3%)	121 (40.5%)
Level 4	33 (22.8%)	8 (18.2%)	5 (4.5%)	46 (15.4%)
Level 5	0	0	0	0

Table 3. Participant Risk/Need Summary

	YCI (n=144) <i>M (SD)</i>	MYI (n=44) <i>M (SD)</i>	OCI (n=110) <i>M (SD)</i>	Total (N = 298) <i>M (SD)</i>
Education Need Score	2.01 (0.86)	2.45 (0.73)	2.40 (1.05)	2.22 (0.94)
History of Violence Risk Score	1.28 (0.63)	1.39 (0.92)	1.63 (0.90)	1.43 (0.80)
Mental Health Need Score	2.58 (0.65)	1.73 (0.82)	1.72 (0.72)	2.14 (0.82)
Severity of Current Offense Risk Score	2.66 (1.22)	2.66 (1.18)	2.92 (1.13)	2.76 (1.19)
Substance Abuse Need Score	2.92 (1.18)	2.68 (1.09)	2.79 (1.15)	2.59 (1.17)

Procedure

Over the course of the RAISE's implementation at the three correctional institutions, approximately 787 inmates enrolled in the program. Data for the present evaluation were obtained by studying consecutive admissions to the program from all three correctional institutions. This procedure has been found to efficiently produce representative samples of treatment program participants (McLellan & Durell, 1996). Data were collected from participants beginning RAISE from September 2005 through July 2006. As mentioned earlier in this report, 301 inmates enrolled in RAISE were approached for participation in the evaluation, and two refused. The very low rate of refusal indicates that the resulting sample was highly representative of those inmates approached for participation in the evaluation.

Pretesting. RAISE evaluation staff attended the first or second day of a new RAISE group to recruit the inmates to participate in the evaluation. Inmates that opted to participate in the evaluation underwent the informed consent process and had their names and inmate numbers recorded on a master list of participants. They were assigned a unique study number and provided with an envelope marked with their study number. The envelope contained the ACLSA, the EQ-i, and QoL.

Participants were instructed not to put their name or inmate number on any of the questionnaires as they would be identified by their study number to enhance their confidentiality. The envelopes were collected by evaluation staff after participants completed the questionnaires. Participants were informed that they would receive a follow up packet when they completed the program.

Posttesting. RAISE evaluation staff attended the last or next to last day RAISE session to administer posttesting. Only participants that had completed the pretesting were eligible to complete the posttesting. Participants were provided with a numbered envelope connected to their study number. The envelope contained the ACLSA, the EQ-i, and FQ. Participants were again instructed not to put their name or inmate number on any of the questionnaires as they would be identified by their study number to enhance their confidentiality. The envelopes were collected by evaluation staff after participants completed the questionnaires.

Recidivism Record Review. In March 2007, DOC supplied evaluation staff with movement data for RAISE participants. This data included the date and nature of each participant's last movement in the DOC system (e.g., transfer from one institution to another, release from custody). This data was utilized to examine the release and recidivism of the participants after their completion of RAISE.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The following section presents the results of the outcome evaluation of RAISE. It begins with a description of program retention followed by an assessment of in-program changes on life skills measures. The final part of this section discusses inmate satisfaction with the program.

Program Retention: Descriptive Data

Program retention data is presented in Table 4. Across the three correctional institutions, 65.9% (n = 195) of the participants completed RAISE. Twenty percent of the participants did not complete RAISE due to administrative reasons: 16.7% (n = 50) were released from custody before they could complete the program, and 3.7% (n = 11) were transferred to another institution before they could complete the program. 12.8% of the participants did not complete RAISE due to behavioral reasons: 7.4% (n = 22) were dropped from the program due to noncompliance, 5.4% (n = 16) dropped out of the program voluntarily. One percent of the participants (n = 3) were still undergoing the program at the time this report was prepared. Excluding the participants who were unable to complete the program due to administrative reasons, RAISE retained 83.69% of the participants that enrolled in the program. There were no significant differences across the institutions in retention.

Table 4. Participant Retention Summary

	YCI (n=145)	MYI (n=44)	OCI (n=110)	Total (n=299)
Completed Program	84 (57.9%)	33 (75%)	80 (72.7%)	197 (65.9%)
Discharged Due to Noncompliance	19 (13.1%)	0	3 (2.7%)	22 (7.4%)
Voluntarily Dropped Program	2 (1.4%)	3 (6.8%)	11 (10%)	16 (5.4%)
Released from Custody	36 (24.8%)	5 (11.4%)	9 (8.2%)	50 (16.7%)
Transferred Out of Institution	1 (0.7%)	3 (6.8%)	7 (6.4%)	11 (3.7%)
Currently Attending Program	3 (2.1%)	0	0	3 (1%)

Program Retention: Predicting Retention

The ability of demographic variables, DOC risk/need scores, and the pretest measures to predict program completion was examined using a series of logistic regression analyses. In order to conduct these analyses, participants' who were unable to complete the program due to administrative reasons were excluded from analysis so that only participants who had an opportunity to complete the program could be studied. Thus, retention was treated as a dichotomous variable, with participants who completed the program being coded with a 0, and participants who dropped out or were dismissed due to non compliance being coded with a 1.

In the first logistic regression analysis, demographic factors (age, gender, race) were entered into the equation as predictors. Only race emerged as a significant predictor of program completion. The direction of the finding indicates that Non-White participants were more likely to successfully complete RAISE (87% retention) than White participants (75% retention). The coefficients from the first regression are presented in Table 5.

In the second logistic regression analysis, DOC risk and need assessment data were entered into the equation as predictors. None emerged as significant predictors of program completion (Table 6).

The third logistic regression, which used EQ-i scores as predictors, was conducted in a hierarchical fashion. On the first step of the regression, scores on the Positive and Negative Impression Scales were entered to control for the influence of participants' attempts to portray themselves in an overly favorable or unfavorable light. On the second step, the Total score, five composite scale scores, and inconsistency scale were entered. None emerged as significant predictors of retention. The coefficients from the third regression are presented in Table 7.

Table 5. Logistic Regression of Demographic Variables Predicting Program Completion

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	Wald	OR
Age	-.02	.02	1.25	.98
Gender	-.56	.36	2.42	.57
Race	-.77*	.37	4.34	.46

Note. Nagelkerke $R^2 = .05$.

* $p < .05$.

Table 6. Logistic Regression of Risk/Need Scores Predicting Program Completion

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	Wald	OR
Education	-.04	.20	.03	.97
Hx of Violence	-.18	.26	.47	.84
Mental Health	.32	.23	2.03	1.38
Severity of Offense	-.27	.16	2.90	.76
Substance Abuse	.08	.15	.25	1.08

Note. Nagelkerke $R^2 = .06$.

Table 7. Logistic Regression of EQ-i Scores Predicting Program Completion

Variable	Order of Entry	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	Wald	OR
Pos Imp	1	-.01	.01	.38	.99
Neg Imp	1	.01	.01	2.27	1.02
Incon Index	2	-.02	.05	.17	.98
Total Score	2	-.04	.11	.10	.97
Intrapersonal Score	2	-.02	.05	.77	1.04
Interpersonal Score	2	.01	.03	.09	1.01
Stress Man. Score	2	.002	.03	.003	1.00
Adapt Score	2	-.01	.03	.16	.99
Mood Score	2	-.03	.03	1.30	.97

Note. Nagelkerke $R^2 = .02$ for Step 1, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .10$ for Step 2.

Changes on the ACLSA from Pretesting to Posttesting

A series of repeated measures analyses of variance were conducted to examine changes on the ACLSA subscales from pretesting to posttesting at each of the three correctional institutions. Means and standard deviations for the ACLSA subscales at pre and posttesting are presented in Table 8. A summary of the analyses of variance for each institution is discussed below.

OCI. At OCI, the raw and mastery scores on the Housing and Money Management subscale increased significantly from pretesting to posttesting. Raw and mastery scores on the Career Planning subscale also increased significantly from pretesting to posttesting. Changes on the Work Life subscale and Social Relationships subscale were not significant.

MYI. At MYI, raw scores on the Housing and Money Management subscale increased significantly from pretesting to posttesting, but mastery scores did not

significantly change. Raw and mastery scores on the other life skills subscales did not significantly change.

YCI. At YCI, raw and mastery scores on the Career Planning subscale increased significantly from pretesting to posttesting. Raw scores on the Housing and Money Management subscale increased significantly from pretesting to posttesting, but mastery scores did not significantly change. There were no significant differences changes on scores on the Work Life subscale or Social Relationships subscale.

Table 8. Summary of Changes in the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment Raw and Mastery Scores

	YCI		MYI		OCI	
	Pretest <i>M (SD)</i>	Posttest <i>M (SD)</i>	Pretest <i>M (SD)</i>	Posttest <i>M (SD)</i>	Pretest <i>M (SD)</i>	Posttest <i>M (SD)</i>
Housing/Money Raw	79.43 (14.8)	85.57 (14.9)*	71.97 (13.0)	80.61 (13.8)*	75.38 (19.1)	85.19 (19.2)*
Housing/Money Mastery	59.33 (27.3)	65.99 (34.6)	41.45 (25.1)	51.35 (33.5)	53.56 (31.1)	65.85 (33.6)*
Career Planning Raw	74.92 (17.4)	84.22 (12.9)*	74.29 (12.5)	78.00 (14.7)	72.53 (20.0)	78.92 (17.9)*
Career Planning Mastery	50.33 (28.9)	62.56 (30.8)*	40.61(25.5)	49.32 (30.4)	45.59 (28.4)	55.07 (30.8)*
Work Life Raw	90.37 (18.7)	89.11 (20.6)	85.95 (15.1)	86.71 (15.2)	90.96 (18.5)	87.67 (21.1)
Work Life Mastery	81.91 (24.1)	75.94 (38.1)	63.87 (34.2)	66.81 (36.1)	79.75 (27.3)	76.32 (33.9)
Social Relation Raw	78.74 (17.1)	79.00 (18.4)	67.87 (13.0)	74.55 (13.7)	74.56 (17.6)	72.47 (20.3)
Social Relation Mastery	57.38 (26.0)	53.55 (34.4)	33.58 (19.3)	39.90 (32.2)	46.43 (29.6)	42.25 (32.1)

Note. Housing/Money Raw = Housing & Money Management Raw Score; Housing/Money Mastery = Housing and Money Management Mastery Score; Social Relation Raw = Social Relationships Raw Score; Social Relation Mastery = Social Relationships Mastery Score.

* $p < .05$.

Changes on the EQ-i from Pretesting to Posttesting

A series of repeated measures analyses of variance were conducted to examine changes on the EQ-i from pretesting to posttesting for participants. Before the analyses were conducted, the Inconsistency scale of each protocol was examined to screen out profiles that would be invalid due to random responding. Nineteen participants from MYI produced nonrandom EQ-i profiles at pre or posttesting, 45 participants from MYI produced an invalid profile, and 43 participants from YCI produced an invalid profile. For purposes of the present evaluation, the EQ-i profiles of participants who omitted an

excessive number of items or who responded to the items an inconsistent manner (suggesting random responding) were eliminated from analyses that involved comparing pretest EQ-i scores to posttest EQ-i scores. Comparison of participants' pretest to posttest scores was limited to the Total score and scores on the five composite scales (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Adaptability, Stress Management, and General Mood) were analyzed. Scores on the smaller subscales were not analyzed due to their large number relative to the sample size, and the redundancy which they presented in the measurement of the scale's constructs.

Due to the relatively small sample of valid EQ-i profiles at pre and posttesting, analyses were not conducted separately for each correctional institution. Instead, all valid profiles were entered into the equations as the dependent variable and gender was entered as a between subjects factor, allowing for the possible emergence of a gender effect.

Means and standard deviations for the EQ-i subscales at pre and posttesting are presented in Table 9. Only the Stress Management score changed significantly from pre to posttesting. The direction of the effect indicates that male and female participants had a significant increase in scores on this scale over the course of the program. The EQ-i total score and the remaining four composite scores did not significantly change.

Table 9. Summary of Changes in Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) Scores

	Men		Women	
	Pretest <i>M (SD)</i>	Posttest <i>M (SD)</i>	Pretest <i>M (SD)</i>	Posttest <i>M (SD)</i>
EQ-i Total Score	95.00 (17.8)	97.20 (18.4)	92.64 (16.2)	95.36 (19.5)
EQ-i Subscale				
Interpersonal	96.64 (16.1)	96.30 (16.9)	90.24 (21.2)	94.24 (19.5)
Intrapersonal	97.24 (17.7)	100.03 (17.4)	96.95 (15.8)	98.10 (18.5)
Stress Management	97.89 (17.8)	100.80 (17.2)	95.36 (15.2)	98.81 (16.1)*
Flexibility	97.30 (18.5)	99.66 (18.8)	98.12 (15.3)	98.90 (19.0)
General Mood	90.48 (17.2)	92.52 (16.0)	89.38 (17.0)	92.14 (17.4)

Note. * $p < .05$.

Participant Satisfaction

Participants provided highly positive evaluations of RAISE on the Project RAISE Feedback Questionnaire (FQ), which they completed at posttesting. Items assessing participant's perceptions of the overall helpfulness of the program, the helpfulness of the counselors, and the helpfulness of each of the five modules had mean ratings over 4.0 on a 5 point scale (with a rating of 5 signifying they found these aspect of the program "very helpful)."

In addition to these global ratings, participants responded to 32 items rating their perceptions of the degree to which the program helped them with specific life skills targeted in the curriculum such as completing a job application, constructing a resume, creating a personal budget, open a bank account, and break down a long-term goal into smaller tasks. These items were rated on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating strong agreement with the helpfulness of the program in addressing a given life skill. Mean ratings on these items were overwhelmingly positive, with 29 items receiving mean ratings between 1 and 2, and the remaining three items receiving mean ratings between 2 and 3. Means and standard deviations to individual items on FQ are presented in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10. Participant Feedback Summary: Helpfulness of Program

	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Overall helpfulness of the program	4.44 (.85)
Helpfulness of the program manual	4.21 (.83)
Helpfulness of the program counselors	4.50 (.87)
Helpfulness of the Values & Personal Responsibility Module	4.10 (.85)
Helpfulness of the Decision Making and Goal Setting Module	4.43 (.73)
Helpfulness of the Employment Module	4.37 (.77)
Helpfulness of the Managing Money Module	4.34 (.69)
Helpfulness of the Transition Module	4.29 (.78)

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = standard deviation. Means reflect ratings on a 5 point scale in which 1 = very unhelpful and 5 = very helpful.

Participant Reincarceration

A check of DOC movement records in March 2007 revealed that 45.5% (n = 136) of the participants had not been released since their enrollment in the program, and the remaining 54.5% (n = 163) had been released. Of the 163 released participants, 15.5% (n = 25) had been reincarcerated. Further analyses of recidivism were not conducted due to the relatively small number of participants that had recidivated and the relatively brief period of time many of the released participants had been in the community.

Table 11. Participant Feedback Summary: Adequacy of Program in Addressing Specific Skills

	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Better identify my personal values	.90 (.84)
Use my values to guide my decisions	1.87 (.83)
Identify my positive and negative personality traits	1.98 (.89)
Identify how my personality traits have led me to make good and bad decisions	1.94 (.95)
Identify my personal strengths	1.91 (.92)
Use my personal strengths to make better decisions	1.89 (.91)
Learn to break down a long term goal into smaller tasks	1.88 (.94)
Identify career interests and strengths	1.90 (.92)
Chose a career goal	2.06 (1.01)
Identify steps to achieve my career goal	1.97 (.94)
Identify ways of seeking employment	1.86 (.95)
Learn to complete a job application	1.86 (.99)
Better prepare for a job interview	1.65 (.90)
Learn to construct a cover letter for a job	1.71 (.91)
Learn how to construct a resume	1.68 (.90)
Learn proper follow up techniques after a job interview	1.71 (.92)
Identify the factors that employers want in their employees	1.83 (.80)
Identify my strengths and weaknesses as an employee	2.02 (.90)
Understand and prioritize various types of debt	1.96 (.87)
Learn how to create a plan to pay back debt	1.95 (.91)
Create a personal budget	1.80 (.82)
Learn cost cutting techniques	1.89 (.83)
Learn how to open and use a bank account	1.98 (.91)
Learn how to responsibly use a credit card	1.96 (.94)
Learn how to complete an IRS tax form	1.92 (.95)
Identify different ways to invest money	2.05 (.93)
Identify my basic needs and how to obtain them	1.85 (.79)
Create a personal education plan	1.98 (.94)
Use employment agencies & training programs	1.88 (.92)
Learn how to obtain basic legal documents	1.97 (.94)
Identify positive leisure activities after my release	1.84 (.85)
Create a transition plan	1.78 (.87)

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = standard deviation. Means reflect ratings on a 5 point scale in which 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the present report is to describe the evaluation of RAISE, a life skills training program piloted at YCI, OCI, and MYI. The choice of these institutions resulted in a diverse evaluation population that included male, female, adult, and youthful offenders of varied ethnic backgrounds. The purpose was RAISE was to provide inmates with training in useful skills such as employment, money management, and decision making because they presumably lacked such skills, and obtaining the skills would ultimately reduce their likelihood of reincarceration. The evaluation of RAISE was based upon qualitative observations of RAISE classes, as well as quantitative data in the form of questionnaires and DOC records from a sample of inmates enrolled in RAISE.

Summary of Findings

Observations of RAISE sessions revealed that while a standard curriculum was used across the three correctional institutions, individual counselor style and institutional demands dictated the actual implementation of the curriculum. Thus, there were differences across the institutions in class size, frequency of individual versus group interaction, frequency of sessions, and length of time to complete the program. In addition, the implementation of RAISE was somewhat influenced by the individual demands of the inmate population at a particular institution. For example, the young age and associated immaturity of MYI participants required a more hands-on approach in the classroom than the more mature populations of OCI and YCI.

Quantitative assessment of RAISE with a sample of 299 participants utilized program retention data, DOC records, and administration of the ACLSA, EQ-i, and a

participant satisfaction survey. Perhaps the most important findings regarding program retention is the high rate of program completion. Excluding the participants who were unable to complete the program due to administrative reasons, 83.69% of the participants completed the program. This high rate of program completion was consistent across the three institutions. The only significant predictor of program completion was race in that Non-White participants were more likely to successfully complete RAISE (87%) than White participants (75%). DOC risk/need scores, personality characteristics, and other demographic data were not significantly associated with program completion.

RAISE participants demonstrated significant improvements on several ACLSA subscales over the course of the program. Improvements on the Housing and Money Management subscale were evident among participants at all three institutions. Improvements on the Career Planning subscale were evident at OCI and YCI, but not at MYI. There were minor changes on the other ACLSA subscales (Work Life and Social Relations) that signaled improvement in these domains but these changes were not statistically significant. With respect to changes in EQ-i subscales over the course of the program, participants demonstrated a significant increase in scores on the Stress Management scale. Scores on the EQ-i total score and the remaining four composite scales did not significantly change.

The survey assessing participants' satisfaction with the program revealed an overwhelmingly positive evaluation of RAISE. Ratings on general as well as specific aspects of the program were all above the midpoint of the scale, with the vast majority skewed toward the positive anchor of rating scale indicating they found the various aspects of the program "very helpful."

Interpretation and Implications of Findings

Considered together, the qualitative, retention, and participant satisfaction data suggest that the RAISE curriculum was robust to setting and method of implementation. Program completion was not appreciably affected by gender, age, session frequency, or program duration differences across the sites. Nor did the program appear to be culturally insensitive toward minority group participants in that they were more likely than White participants to complete the program. Participants across all three institutions perceived the program as helpful, providing high satisfaction ratings across the various domains of the curriculum.

The ACLSA findings suggest that for older participants (e.g., OCI and YCI inmates), improvements in housing, money management, and career planning skills are associated with completion of RAISE. This was expected because RAISE units specifically targeted these skills. For the MYI participants, improvements in housing and money management, but not career planning, were associated with completion of RAISE. The absence of a significant change in Career Planning for MYI participants may be explained by the possibility that the MYI population will be reentering school, rather than pursuing a career, upon their release from custody. This may have made the material in the Career Planning unit more unfamiliar and abstract for them compared to their older counterparts at OCI and MYI. The fact scores on the Work Life and Social Relations subscales did not significantly change at any of the institutions may be a reflection of the content of the subscales: both focus on interpersonal skills, and such skills are not a core part of the RAISE curriculum.

The EQ-i findings suggest that RAISE completion is associated with an improvement in stress management skills. It was expected that the skills learned across the five RAISE units would enhance participants' perceived ability to cope with the demands of life. That scores on the other EQ-i scales did not change may also be a reflection on the content of several the scales, which tended to address interpersonal/emotional functioning, which are not core components of the RAISE curriculum.

The participant satisfaction findings suggest that the existing RAISE curriculum is highly palatable to a diverse offender population. Regardless of the program's measurable impact on skills, participants perceived it as helpful. The participant satisfaction ratings were so high that areas of program weakness from the perspective of the participants were no able to be clearly identified.

Limitations

This evaluation has several limitations. Due to time constraints regarding the completion of the present report, the effect of the program on reincarceration could not be fully evaluated. At the time of this report, almost half of the RAISE participants remain incarcerated for their instant offense. Of those participants who have been released since their completion of the program, few have been released for any appreciable length of time.

Another limitation of the evaluation was the lack of precise measurement tools to assess the skills presented in the Values, Decision Making, and Transition Planning units. An attempt was made to assess the Values & Decision Making units through the use of the EQ-i. In particular, the Stress Management composite scale (which includes

measurement of control over emotions and impulses) and the Adaptability composite scale (which include measurement of effective problem solving and flexibly adapting one's thinking as the situation demands) were expected to be sensitive to changes in decision-making. However, these may have been crude measures for the RAISE units, and therefore unable to capture changes in participants' thinking and behavior related to these units. A lack of standardized assessment instruments for RAISE constructs such as values and transition planning required the evaluation to focus on the more behaviorally oriented constructs such as employment skills and money management.

A final limitation of the evaluation was the relatively pre-screened nature of the participants. Due to restrictions on RAISE eligibility, inmates who were significant institutional behavioral problems, or who were not participating in vocational programs were not in RAISE, and consequently not in the evaluation. This restricted range of inmates may have restricted the variability on participants' risk/need scores, and ACLSA and EQ-i scores. This may have consequently reduced the ability of the evaluation to detect significant changes on the ACLSA and EQ-i due to the program, and may have impacted the ability to detect risk/need and EQ-i score associations with program completion. For example, it may be that inmates who are behaviorally problematic and not attending vocational programs in their institutions would enter RAISE with significantly lower ACLSA scores at baseline, which would make their opportunity to significantly improve on the assessment at program completion greater than the appropriately behaved, vocationally inclined participants that participated in the RAISE evaluation.

Recommendations

Our first recommendation, and one which is a natural extension of a limitation raised in the preceding section, is to examine the reincarceration rate for participants who completed RAISE after all participants have been in the community for a period of at least one year. A comparison of the reincarceration rate of this group to their institutional peers will provide a basis for examining the influence of the program on criminal behavior. If reincarceration rates are appreciably decreased following RAISE participation, we recommend a wider implementation of the program to the general population of inmates preparing for release.

In the absence of data on RAISE's impact on reincarceration, there are other factors that would recommend the continued implementation of RAISE in the Connecticut prison system. First, the curriculum was developed by Connecticut DOC staff members. It is therefore, uniquely tailored to the population for which it is intended. Second, based upon participant satisfaction surveys, it appears that inmates perceive the program to be of benefit. Third, the program appears relatively robust across cultural groups, age, and gender with regard to the rates of inmates willing to attend the program from beginning to completion. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, RAISE is associated with measurable improvements in housing and money management skills and employment skills for adult inmates. These are domains that have been repeatedly found to be associated with higher rates of recidivism when they are not successfully addressed.

In extending RAISE to the general population of inmates preparing for release, we have two recommendations. First, the timing of RAISE participation should be strategic. Inmates should participate in RAISE within a few months of their anticipated

release from custody. Participating in RAISE significantly before release from custody may reduce the potential effectiveness of the program. As the time between participation in RAISE and the opportunity to utilize the skills and information presented in RAISE widens, the skills and information will decay. Similarly, participation in RAISE too close to the date of release from custody may result in inmates' leaving custody before they have an opportunity to complete the program, as was the case with about 17% of the participants in the RAISE evaluation.

Second, the length of time to deliver RAISE may need to be standardized across institutions in order to ensure that inmates have ample opportunity to complete the program prior to their release. If the length of the program is extended over the course of several months, inmates may be released before they have an opportunity to complete the program. On the other hand, delivery of RAISE in a highly condensed period of time, such as a full day program for two weeks, poses the risk that there will be insufficient time for participants to process the material and practice the skills that are presented by the counselors.

If RAISE is implemented into the general inmate population, it would be important to develop assessment tools capable of measuring the specific learning objectives of each session, and to regularly assess inmate progress through the curriculum. For example, an assessment tool might document the number of new skills that the inmate was able to successfully demonstrate over the course of the program. This information would have two purposes. One, it could provide a means for examining counselor's adherence to the curriculum and identify needed changes to the curriculum.

Two, it could provide a more precise measurement of the program on reincarceration and the specific skills provided by the program that are most linked with successful reentry.

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